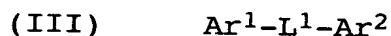


C L A I M S

1. An optical compensatory sheet which consists of a polymer film containing a rod-like compound, which gives an ultraviolet absorption spectrum, in which the wavelength of  $\lambda_{\text{max}}$  at the maximum absorption peak is shorter than 250 nm, said spectrum of the rod-like compound being measured when the rod-like compound is in the form of a solution, wherein the polymer film has an Rth retardation value of Rth450 measured at the wavelength of 450 nm in the range of 30 to 160 nm, and an Rth retardation value of Rth590 measured at the wavelength of 590 nm in the range of 50 to 200 nm, said values of the Rth450 and Rth590 satisfying the condition of  $\text{Rth590} - \text{Rth450} \geq 2 \text{ nm}$ .
2. The optical compensatory sheet of claim 1, wherein the polymer film has an Re retardation value of Re450 measured at the wavelength of 450 nm in the range of 10 to 60 nm, and an Re retardation value of Re590 measured at the wavelength of 590 nm in the range of 20 to 70 nm, said values of Re450 and Re590 satisfying the condition of  $\text{Re590} - \text{Re450} \geq 2 \text{ nm}$ .
3. The optical compensatory sheet of claim 1, wherein the polymer film is made of cellulose ester.
4. The optical compensatory sheet of claim 1, wherein the polymer film is a film stretched with a stretching ratio of 3 to 100%.
5. The optical compensatory sheet of claim 1, wherein the rod-like compound has a linear molecular structure.

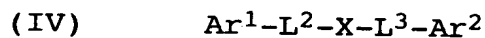
6. The optical compensatory sheet of claim 1,  
wherein the rod-like compound is liquid crystal.

7. The optical compensatory sheet of claim 1,  
5 wherein the rod-like compound is represented by the formula  
(III):



10 in which each of  $Ar^1$  and  $Ar^2$  independently is an aromatic  
group; and  $L^1$  is a divalent linking group selected from the  
group consisting of an alkylene group, an alkenylene group,  
an alkynylene group, a divalent saturated heterocyclic  
group, -O-, -CO- and a combination thereof.

8. The optical compensatory sheet of claim 7,  
15 wherein the rod-like compound is represented by the formula  
(IV):



20 in which each of  $Ar^1$  and  $Ar^2$  independently is an aromatic  
group; each of  $L^2$  and  $L^3$  independently is a divalent link-  
ing group selected from the group consisting of an alkylene  
group, -O-, -CO- and a combination thereof; and X is 1,4-  
cyclohexylene, vinylene or ethynylene.

9. An image display device having an optical compensatory sheet, wherein the optical compensatory sheet consists of a polymer film containing a rod-like compound, which gives an ultraviolet absorption spectrum, in which the wavelength of  $\lambda_{\max}$  at the maximum absorption peak is shorter than 250 nm, said spectrum of the rod-like compound being measured when the rod-like compound is in the form of a solution, wherein the polymer film has an Rth retardation value of Rth450 measured at the wavelength of 450 nm in the range of 30 to 160 nm, and an Rth retardation value of Rth590 measured at the wavelength of 590 nm in the range of 50 to 200 nm, said values of the Rth450 and Rth590 satisfying the condition of  $Rth590 - Rth450 \geq 2$  nm.
10. A polarizing plate comprising a pair of transparent protective films and a polarizing membrane provided between the transparent protective films, wherein at least one of the protective films is an optical compensatory sheet which consists of a polymer film containing a rod-like compound, which gives an ultraviolet absorption spectrum, in which the wavelength of  $\lambda_{\max}$  at the maximum absorption peak is shorter than 250 nm, said spectrum of the rod-like compound being measured when the rod-like compound is in the form of a solution, wherein the polymer film has an Rth retardation value of Rth450 measured at the wavelength of 450 nm in the range of 30 to 160 nm, and an Rth retardation value of Rth590 measured at the wavelength of 590 nm in the range of 50 to 200 nm, said values of the Rth450 and Rth590 satisfying the condition of  $Rth590 - Rth450 \geq 2$  nm, and wherein the optical compensatory sheet and the polarizing membrane are so placed that the transmission axis of the membrane is parallel or perpendicular to the slow axis of the polymer film.

11. An image display device having a polarizing plate, said polarizing plate comprising a pair of transparent protective films and a polarizing membrane provided between the transparent protective films, wherein at least  
5 one of the protective films is an optical compensatory sheet which consists of a polymer film containing a rod-like compound, which gives an ultraviolet absorption spectrum, in which the wavelength of  $\lambda_{\max}$  at the maximum absorption peak is shorter than 250 nm, said spectrum of the  
10 rod-like compound being measured when the rod-like compound is in the form of a solution, wherein the polymer film has an Rth retardation value of Rth450 measured at the wavelength of 450 nm in the range of 30 to 160 nm, and an Rth retardation value of Rth590 measured at the wavelength of  
15 590 nm in the range of 50 to 200 nm, said values of the Rth450 and Rth590 satisfying the condition of  $R_{th590} - R_{th450} \geq 2$  nm, and wherein the optical compensatory sheet and the polarizing membrane are so placed that the transmission axis of the membrane is parallel or perpendicular to the slow  
20 axis of the polymer film.

12. An optical compensatory sheet which comprises an optically anisotropic layer and a polymer film, said optically anisotropic layer being formed from a liquid crystal  
25 compound, and said polymer film containing a rod-like compound, which gives an ultraviolet absorption spectrum, in which the wavelength of  $\lambda_{\max}$  at the maximum absorption peak is shorter than 250 nm, said spectrum of the rod-like compound being measured when the rod-like compound is in the  
30 form of a solution, wherein the polymer film has an Rth retardation value of Rth450 measured at the wavelength of 450 nm in the range of 30 to 160 nm, and an Rth retardation value of Rth590 measured at the wavelength of 590 nm in the range of 50 to 200 nm, said values of the Rth450 and Rth590  
35 satisfying the condition of  $R_{th590} - R_{th450} \geq 2$  nm.

13. The optical compensatory sheet of claim 12,  
wherein the polymer film has an Re retardation value of  
Re450 measured at the wavelength of 450 nm in the range of  
10 to 60 nm, and an Re retardation value of Re590 measured  
at the wavelength of 590 nm in the range of 20 to 70 nm,  
said values of Re450 and Re590 satisfying the condition of  
 $\text{Re590} - \text{Re450} \geq 2 \text{ nm}$ .

14. The optical compensatory sheet of claim 12,  
wherein the polymer film is made of cellulose ester.

15. The optical compensatory sheet of claim 12,  
wherein the polymer film is a film stretched with a  
stretching ratio of 3 to 100%.

16. The optical compensatory sheet of claim 12,  
wherein the rod-like compound has a linear molecular struc-  
ture.

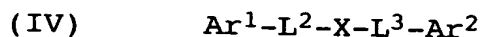
17. The optical compensatory sheet of claim 12,  
wherein the rod-like compound is liquid crystal.

18. The optical compensatory sheet of claim 12,  
wherein the rod-like compound is represented by the formula  
(III):



in which each of  $\text{Ar}^1$  and  $\text{Ar}^2$  independently is an aromatic  
group; and  $\text{L}^1$  is a divalent linking group selected from the  
group consisting of an alkylene group, an alkenylene group,  
an alkynylene group, a divalent saturated heterocyclic  
group, -O-, -CO- and a combination thereof.

19. The optical compensatory sheet of claim 18, wherein the rod-like compound is represented by the formula (IV):



5 in which each of  $Ar^1$  and  $Ar^2$  independently is an aromatic group; each of  $L^2$  and  $L^3$  independently is a divalent linking group selected from the group consisting of an alkylene group, -O-, -CO- and a combination thereof; and X is 1,4-cyclohexylene, vinylene or ethynylene.

10

20. An image display device having an optical compensatory sheet, wherein the optical compensatory sheet comprises an optically anisotropic layer and a polymer film, said optically anisotropic layer being formed from a liquid  
15 crystal compound, and said polymer film containing a rod-like compound, which gives an ultraviolet absorption spectrum, in which the wavelength of  $\lambda_{max}$  at the maximum absorption peak is shorter than 250 nm, said spectrum of the rod-like compound being measured when the rod-like compound  
20 is in the form of a solution, wherein the polymer film has an  $R_{th}$  retardation value of  $R_{th450}$  measured at the wavelength of 450 nm in the range of 30 to 160 nm, and an  $R_{th}$  retardation value of  $R_{th590}$  measured at the wavelength of 590 nm in the range of 50 to 200 nm, said values of the  
25  $R_{th450}$  and  $R_{th590}$  satisfying the condition of  $R_{th590}-R_{th450} \geq 2$  nm.

21. A polarizing plate comprising a pair of transparent protective films and a polarizing membrane provided between the transparent protective films, wherein at least one of the protective films is an optical compensatory  
5 sheet which comprises an optically anisotropic layer and a polymer film, said optically anisotropic layer being formed from a liquid crystal compound, and said polymer film containing a rod-like compound, which gives an ultraviolet absorption spectrum, in which the wavelength of  $\lambda_{\text{max}}$  at the  
10 maximum absorption peak is shorter than 250 nm, said spectrum of the rod-like compound being measured when the rod-like compound is in the form of a solution, wherein the polymer film has an Rth retardation value of Rth450 measured at the wavelength of 450 nm in the range of 30 to 160 nm,  
15 and an Rth retardation value of Rth590 measured at the wavelength of 590 nm in the range of 50 to 200 nm, said values of the Rth450 and Rth590 satisfying the condition of  $\text{Rth590} - \text{Rth450} \geq 2 \text{ nm}$ , and wherein the optical compensatory sheet and the polarizing membrane are so placed that the  
20 transmission axis of the membrane is parallel or perpendicular to the slow axis of the polymer film.

22. An image display device having a polarizing plate, said polarizing plate comprising a pair of transparent protective films and a polarizing membrane provided between the transparent protective films, wherein at least  
5 one of the protective films is an optical compensatory sheet which comprises an optically anisotropic layer and a polymer film, said optically anisotropic layer being formed from a liquid crystal compound, and said polymer film containing a rod-like compound, which gives an ultraviolet absorption spectrum, in which the wavelength of  $\lambda_{\text{max}}$  at the  
10 maximum absorption peak is shorter than 250 nm, said spectrum of the rod-like compound being measured when the rod-like compound is in the form of a solution, wherein the polymer film has an Rth retardation value of Rth450 measured  
15 at the wavelength of 450 nm in the range of 30 to 160 nm, and an Rth retardation value of Rth590 measured at the wavelength of 590 nm in the range of 50 to 200 nm, said values of the Rth450 and Rth590 satisfying the condition of  $\text{Rth590} - \text{Rth450} \geq 2 \text{ nm}$ , and wherein the optical compensatory  
20 sheet and the polarizing membrane are so placed that the transmission axis of the membrane is parallel or perpendicular to the slow axis of the polymer film.